"*Ask, Seek & Knock*"

Matthew 7:7-12
7/30/2017

INTRODUCTION:

***Pray! Your Father in Heaven is a great giver!**
How does God give?

I. God's Giving is <u>GUARANTEED</u> (v. 7)
(God answers prayer with <u>certainty</u>)

II. God's Giving is <u>GENEROUS</u> (v. 8)
(God answers prayer with <u>impartiality</u>)

III. God's Giving is <u>GOOD</u> (v. 9-11)
(God answers prayer with <u>goodness</u>)

CONCLUSION: ***How do you give? (v. 12)***

"If you expect God to treat you good,
you should treat others in the same way that you want to be treated."

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"A Wish List"

Write down as many things as you can think of that you wish would be done for you.

1. I wish God would do this for me:
   a.
   b.
   c.
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2. I wish my husband/wife would do this for me:
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3. I wish my friend(s) would do this for me:
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4. I wish my neighbor would do this for me:
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5. I wish my co-worker would do this for me:
   a.
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6. I wish the people at our church would do this for me:
   a.
   b.
   c.
   d.

(Have the people fill out the above form before the message)

God loves fellowship!

He created man in "His own image," giving him a spirit, sot hat man could do what no other animal or creature could do -- namely: intelligently commune or fellowship with the Creator.

God really desires that we rely upon Him daily!

He wants us to come to Him.

He enjoys us asking, seeking, and knocking.

Unlike people who get annoyed at beggars, nosy people, and people banging on our door. God wants it! He delights in it!

"The prayer of the upright is His delight" (Prov. 15:8)

Not only does God want to hear us, He wants to bless us, give to us!

The word "give" occurs 5 times in verses 7 - 11.

***Pray! Your Father in Heaven gives!**

How does God give?

I. God's Giving is GUARANTEED (v. 7)
(God answers prayer with certainty)

Note the emphasis on the certainty of the promise of answered prayer.

V. 7 - ***"shall be. . . shall. . . shall"*** Cp. V. 8 - *"shall be opened"* V. 11 - *"how much more shall"*

Everyone who sincerely asks, seeks, and knocks will receive answers.

This promise, when compared to the rest of Scripture, is not a "blank check" that applies to anyone or any request.
The "anyone" refers to those who have God as their "Father which is in Heaven" (it applies to sons of God, born again believers)

This promise to answered prayer is also conditioned upon your:

1) Closeness to Christ and His Word (i.e. so that you ask according to His will - I Jn. 5:14-15)

2) Obedience to Christ (I Jn. 3:22 - *"And whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, because we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight"*)

3) Faith (Mk. 11:24 - *"Therefore I say unto you, What things so ever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them."*) (cp. James 1:6, 7)

Very often, the reason we *"have not"* is because we *"ask not"* (James 4:2)

"If I told you that God has promised that if ye will prepare the soil properly and sow wheat in the ground, you would get wheat, you would say, "Of course, If you don't put the seed in the ground, you won't get wheat." In just the same way, if you pray you will have, and if you don't pray you will not have. It is as simply as that. God wants to help you, but this help is extended to those who ask Him for it. He will be found of the people who seek Him, and He will open the door for the people who knock." (Gutzke, Matthew, p. 62).

"Ask" implies a request for provision (for basic needs, for things that would glorify God)

"Seek" implies a request for answers (ex. wisdom cp. Ja. 1:5 - *"If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him.")*

"Knock" implies a request for opportunity (an entrance into something, an "open door" of opportunity). Jesus promised the church of Philadelphia, *"Behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it"* (Rev. 3:8) The church at Antioch saw how God *"had opened the door of faith unto the Gentiles"* (Acts 14:27)

When you need something from the one who has plenty, ASK!

When you need something of real value, SEEK!

When you are shut out and need or want entrance, KNOCK!

Knocking on someone's door is something I don't often like to do. I feel, "I don't want to be a bother," or "Perhaps my visit is not welcomed."

Sometimes people --ridden with guilt or because it has been so long since they came to God's door in prayer-- are reluctant to knock.

However, unless you knock, the door won't be opened!

The word "ask" alludes to our mouth
The word "seek" alludes to our eyes
The word "knock" alludes to our hands

The words *"seek and knock"* show us that there is more to prayer than just asking. If the request can be accomplished by human effort, we cannot sluggishly or complacently remain passive until the answer drops out of the sky.

Get to it and seek God's will until you find it; go out and knock on every door until the right door opens!

II. God's Giving is GENEROUS (v. 8)
(God answers prayer with impartiality)

Whereas verse 7 emphasizes the certainty of God in answering prayer, verse 8 emphasizes the impartiality of God in answering prayer.

NOTE: The emphasis: "*for everyone . . . he that seeketh* (no matter who he is) . . . *to him that knocketh* (no matter who he is, as long as he is knocking)

The reason why many Christians are discouraged from praying is because they believe the devil's lie as he whispers in their ear: "God isn't interested in you" "God won't answer your prayer."

- God is not reluctant to give.
- He will not mock our requests (Ja. 1:5 - *"He upbraideth not")*
- He does not gve trash or less than the best, but rather "*He is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think"* (Eph. 3:20)
- God does not give based upon the color of your skin; the importance you have in the eyes of the world;' the position you hold in this local church.

Some of the greatest prayer warriors have been "ordinary" people! God shows no bias, favoritism. He wants to answer your prayer. The sincere prayers of everyone who belongs to Him.

Note: The present tense of the verbs: "*ask, seek, knock"* (v. 7), and *"ask*eth*, seek*eth*, knock*eth*"* (v. 8) suggests that we need persistence in our praying.

To test the sincerity and earnestness of our requests God will often allow us to come to Him several times before He will grant our request.

It does not mean that He was too busy to hear us the first time, but for our benefit He may delay an answer to test how serious we are!

ILLUS: The Importunity (persistence) of the man at midnight (Luke 11:5-8)

The importunity (persistence of the troubled widow (Luke 18:1-8)

The common phrase: "Seek the Lord" implies spiritual effort! (Dt. 4:29, I Chron. 16:11, Is. 55:6, Jer. 29:13, Ps. 105:4; Prov. 8:17)

Jer. 29:13 - *"And ye shall seek Me, and find Me, when ye shall search for Me with all your heart."*

III. God's Giving is <u>GOOD</u> (v. 9-11)
(God answers prayer with <u>goodness</u>)

Luke records that Jesus also said, "*If he shall ask an egg, will he offer Him a scorpion?*" (Luke 11:12)

"Being evil" - Jesus asserts the depravity of man. He who knew all men's hearts boldly declares the inherent sinfulness of man.

"Being evil" - Contrary to the thinking of the New Age philosophy, we do not have divinity with in us (for God is not evil); we don't even have a "spark" of divinity.

Though man is evil, he still has a capacity to give what he considers good gifts to his children.

Even unsaved people seek the well-being of their children.

Even some lost parents are concerned that their children are well fed, well clothed, kept protected; receive a good education; have their physical, emotional, and intellectual needs met. Even sinners make plans for their children's future.

"The most naturally selfless relationship among human beings is that of parents their children. We are more likely to sacrifice for our children, even to the point of giving up our lives, than for any other person in the world. Yet the greatest human parental love cannot compare with God's (Mac. p. 446)

"Good things" - Everything <u>good</u> that we have is because of the kindness of God, because of His righteous nature God cannot give anything but good to His children.

James 1:17 - *"Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning."*

Contrary to the devil's lies, God does not withhold or forbid that which is for our good. If He forbids it, it is because it is bad for us.

One of the good things that God gives to all of His children is the Holy Spirit. Ever since the day of Pentecost, the gift of the Holy Spirit has been given to all believers (Acts 10:45; Rom. 8:9) However, before Pentecost, people had to ask for the spirit and His empowerment. For this reason Luke records: *"If ye then, being evil, know h ow to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?"*

Jesus' point: If depraved, sinful, selfish, fathers know how to give good gifts to their children, is it possible that our holy, perfect all wise, all knowing, all caring loving Heavenly Father would fail to give good gifts to His children who ask? NO!

CONCLUSION: ***How do you give? (v. 12)***

"If you expect God to treat you good,
you should treat others in the same way that you want to be treated."

"Therefore" - Since God does for us what we ask of him, we should likewise have the same loving attitude and do for others what we would want them to do for us.

This verse commonly known as "the Golden Rule" has been called "the Mount Everest of ethics" (Barclay).

It is love at its highest.

We are to do good to all men, especially those of the household of faith (Gal. 6:10)

Perhaps, also implied by the connection between v. 12 and the previous promises on prayer is this truth: If we do for others what we wish they did for us: God will do for us, (in kind) what we did for others.

How could we expect God to do what we wish if we do not do for others what we wish the would do for us?

If you want God to give you good things, but you are not willing to give others good things, what right do you have to ask God to do for you what you are unwilling to do for others.

Think for a minute: What good things would you like others (your spouse, friend, neighbor, co-worker, fellow Christian) to do for you?

Now that you have it in mind, go and do it for them! (even if they never do what you would like, at least you now know how you must treat them)

--We should not treat people the way <u>they treat us</u> (good for good, evil for evil)

Note: that Jesus does <u>not</u> say "*Do to others what they do to you"* (cp. Mt. 5:46)

He is not teaching Lex Talionis - *"eye for eye"*

But rather, "*Do to others what you <u>wish</u> (desire) that they would do to you.*
"Treat them like you want to be treated"

--We should not treat people the way <u>they think</u> they should be treated

--We should not treat people the way <u>we think</u> they should be treated

Rather, we should treat people the way we <u>want</u> them to treat us
(Preacher's Outline & Sermon Bible, Matthew, p. 150)
Other ancient religions and philosophers taught a form of this principle,b ut fell short (they stressed only the negative)

They basically taught: "Don't do to others, what you don't want them to do to you (SEE: MacArthur, p. 447, examples)

However, the motivation for this principle is not love, but selfishness (self-interest, self-preservation). Basically someone could fulfill this one, and yet never have anything at all to do with you.

Someone does not love you just because they don't do you wrong, but because they positively do you right.

If you were <u>lost</u> (unsaved what would you want someone to do for you?

Go and do likewise!

If you were <u>lonely</u>, what would you want someone to do for you?

Go and do likewise!

If you were <u>financially struggling</u>, what would you want someone to do for you?

Go and do likewise!

If you were <u>living in a convalescent home</u>, what would you want someone to do for you?

Go and do likewise!

If you were a <u>new Christian in need of fellowship</u>, what would you want someone to do for you?

Go and do likewise!

"For this is the law and the prophets" This command being synonymous with the greatest command, "to love your neighbor as yourself" (mt. 22:39; Lev. 19:18) is a condensed, concise, precise, secret to fulfilling the every requirement in the Bible (in terms of human relationship). The key to fulfilling the Law is to love others like you would want them to love you.

Love fulfills every commandment God has given.

Rom. 13:8 - "Owe no man any thing, but to love one another: for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law."
Gal. 5:14 - "For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this: Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself."

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